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Aviation report welcomed – but industry looks for action



The report of the Aviation Safety Regulatory Review has been welcomed by AAAA as a useful step forward in fixing Australia's aviation safety system, but industry focus has swiftly moved onto urgent Government action to address the problems.

CEO of the Aerial Agricultural Association of Australia, Mr Phil Hurst, has indicated that industry feels vindicated in its criticism of CASA's culture, which the report found to be 'not appropriate for an advanced aviation nation such as Australia'.

'The Minister now has a well-considered independent report that makes the case for change. The report recommends some useful steps forward that could be taken quickly to remedy the significant challenges faced by industry.

'AAAA believes that the position of the current CASA Board and the senior management of CASA is simply untenable in the face of such stinging criticism regarding culture, values, performance, processes and outcomes.

'The CASA Board should immediately resign to clear the way for a completely new approach in line with most of the report's findings.

'A range of recommendations, including a restructure of CASA to better match industry sectors, delegation of medical certificate issuing to DAMEs, improvements to the Independent Complaints Commissioner, the establishment of merit decision reviews and greater oversight of CASA by the Department of Infrastructure will make a real difference to performance and should be implemented immediately.

'In conjunction with the Minister's outstanding election commitment to establish an Aviation Ministerial Council, the suite of changes recommended should go a long way to putting CASA on a trajectory towards meeting international, Australian government and industry standards of performance.

'However, the report has a number of critical flaws and miscues that the Minister would be well advised to ignore, including the identification to CASA of all aircraft accident operator details. This recommendation fundamentally contradicts the need for a 'just' culture to be established *before* a regulator can be trusted to act fairly by the industry.

'Similarly, the move to strip ATSB of safety promotion responsibilities flies in the face of industry recommendations that clearly suggested the opposite – that ATSB receive CASA's resources as ATSB are better placed to deliver positive outcomes.

'CASA has clearly broken industry's trust and this will only be rebuilt by positive and urgent outcomes – not just more words and business as usual', Mr Hurst said.

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